

House Republican Press Release

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REP. HARKINS APPLAUDS GOVERNOR RELL'S VETO OF FLAWED CONTRACTING BILL



Hartford—State Rep. John Harkins, R-Stratford, expressed strong support and was present for Governor M. Jodi Rell's veto of legislation on Thursday, March 16, that would have impacted the state's ability to contract with private vendors. It marks the third time in the past 12 months that the Governor has vetoed legislation passed largely along partisan lines that contained anti-

privatization measures.

By tying up the contracting reform proposals with anti-privatization language, private non-profit providers and their clients would be negatively impacted, said Rep Harkins, who voted against the bill. As well, services the state provides by means of private contractors for virtually all state agencies would be negatively impacted. The state would not be able to provide services at greatly reduced costs, thus costing taxpayers more money, he said.

During a June 2005 special session, the Democratic majority amended a 2005-2007 budget 'implementer' bill with anti-privatization language that affected an already adopted contracting reform bill (Public Act 05-286). Governor Rell vetoed the contracting bill (Senate Bill 94) and enacted her own contracting reform language through an executive order. In November 2005, the Democrat majority again offered a contracting reform proposal (Senate Bill 2101) that included anti-privatization language for both non-profit and for-profit private providers, which was also vetoed.

"Governor Rell has again vetoed a bill that would handicap the state's ability to contract with non-profit providers," said Rep. Harkins, who serves as an Assistant Minority Leader. "Some legislators claim we need to enact so-called contracting reform for state government but at the same time, simply cannot help themselves from including language that benefits their special interests. This was a poor attempt at "clean government" legislation and I am glad the Governor recognized its flaws. Implementation of this bill would have negatively impacted providers who are servicing some of our most vulnerable citizens, including the physically disabled and persons with special needs. One of government's fundamental responsibilities is to assist those who cannot help themselves."